

Remarks at swearing in ceremony

Mayor Mike Winder

January 4, 2010

My fellow citizens: It is a humble honor to swear my allegiance to the Constitution today, and to take office as the seventh mayor of West Valley City. I think of the leaders who have taken that same oath over the past three decades, who each brought a different style, skill set, and personality to this office.

I think of tenacious Hank Price, our first mayor and the standard bearer in our city's struggle for independence from county rule. Merely days within taking his oath of office, he was faced with foes determined to disincorporate our infant city, but successfully led the fight for West Valley City to remain in existence.

Mayor Gerald Maloney saw our toddling city dig out of financial duress, and begin to stand on its own two feet, and Mayors Mike Embley and Brent Anderson helped it grow and prepared for a new city hall. I recall the words Mayor Gearld Wright spoke when he said "I think if there were one word to describe this city, it's 'home.' I think people out here feel really good about West Valley. I think they're so pleased with what's happening—and what will happen."

He uttered those words at our city's 20th anniversary celebration and in the decade since great things have indeed happened in our hometown. During the years of Mayor Dennis Nordfelt this city has seen recycling adopted, graffiti cleaned up, crime reduced for three straight years, a new animal shelter completed, the mall redevelopment commence, 3500 South widened, TRAX construction begin and the Utah Cultural Celebration Center emerge as one of the jewels of the Mountain West.

A coworker of mine the other day said, "Mike, West Valley City is really a different place than it was ten or twenty years ago. You guys have a lot going on out there." To which I replied to him, and to which I say to you, "Yes, and wait until you see the progress and growth that the next ten years will bring."

Progress as promised. Where we are as a city today is the result of a team effort of elected officials, city staff, taxpayers, and other stakeholder partners. Together we have built the West Valley City of today, and together we built the foundation for the future.

Remembering from whence we came, today we celebrate our shared hope for tomorrow. We enter a season where, with this strong platform, the West Valley City renaissance has begun.

Yes, many in our community need jobs; but job development and strengthening the economy and businesses of our city will be a top priority.

Yes, more of our young people need to go on to college; but our relationship with Granite School District has never been better and we will partner with them to build Utah's newest high school in our city and to address this need.

Yes, a mother of two from our community is presently missing; but she is continually in our thoughts and prayers, and we have Utah's finest detectives working on the case. Susan Powell, we will find you and bring you home!

Yes, many of our neighborhoods are older and need reinvestment, but we will find ways to build trails and new parks to reinvigorate and better connect West Valley's subdivisions.

Yes, too many of our friends around the state don't appreciate what a great place West Valley City is. To that I say come to our great entertainment, culture, and sporting venues; get to know some of our fine neighborhoods and the down-to-earth people who live there; shop in our mall, our stores, and our restaurants. You, too, will discover that the West Valley City of today is better than the city of ten years ago, and twenty years ago; and that the best is yet to come.

The West Valley City of today is the melting pot of the state and a welcoming place like no other. Here everyone abiding by the law is welcome, regardless of your heritage, ethnicity, or income; regardless of your religion, sexual orientation, or political party. We are a community of pragmatic neighbors, who work hard to provide for our families, but who will never hesitate to help a neighbor. We are a city that may be the second largest in the state in population, but we are number one in heart.

I thank the many friends and family that were part of my campaign, and now invite you to join me in working to make our city even better. I especially thank my parents and in-laws, Kent and Sherri Winder and Rob and Lynda Hermansen—all longtime West Valley residents who represent the strong platform we stand on today. I also thank my children for their support, Jessica, Michael, John and Grace—newer West Valley residents who represent the future of the city with their hopes and dreams. Finally, I would not be here today or able to ever reach my potential without my dear Karyn, the newest First Lady of our city.

I pledge my all to working with my colleagues on the City Council to build on this momentum and usher in a bright future. I pledge to represent not only those who voted for me, but those who did not, and those who didn't even vote. I pledge to be the mayor of all the people of this city, from Diamond Summit to Chesterfield, from Ridgeland Downs to Highbury. May God bless you, and may God's grace continue to shine forth on West Valley City, Utah.